

REMARKS

All claims have been rejected over the prior art. The examiner has relied on Anderson, Carbonnier and SU '094 as the principal references.

The previous claims have been canceled, and new claims 11-17 are now presented for examination.

Both claim 11 and claim 14 are directed to a flotation cell comprising a rotor and a stator that includes a plurality of flow regulators that are spaced apart about the rotor. Claims 11 and 14 also require that each flow regulator has an inner side that extends substantially parallel to the axis of rotation of the rotor over substantially the entire height of the rotor at a substantially uniform distance from the axis of rotation, and that the flow regulators are movable radially relative to the axis of rotation of the rotor, whereby different flow regulators may be located at selected respective distances from the axis of rotation of the rotor.

Further, both claim 11 and claim 14 state that the flow regulators include first, second and third angularly adjacent flow regulators, with the second flow regulator angularly between the first and third flow regulators.

In accordance with claim 11, the inner side of the second flow regulator is farther from the axis of rotation than is the inner side of the first flow regulator and is closer to said axis of rotation than is the inner side of the third flow regulator. Thus, claim 11 requires that the inner side of the second flow regulator be radially between the inner sides of the first and third flow regulators.

Claim 14 requires that the inner side of the second flow regulator be farther from the axis of rotation than is the inner side of the first flow regulator and the inner side of the third flow regulator.

Applicant believes that the prior art that is closest to the subject matter of the claims is RU '380, which discloses a flotation machine in which each stator blade has three pieces and

each piece is radial and is movable radially by the mechanism 5. The new claims 11 and 14 distinguish over RU '380 by specifying that the inner side of each flow regulator extends substantially parallel to the axis of rotation of the rotor over substantially the entire height of the rotor at a substantially uniform distance from the axis of rotation. Claims 11 and 14 further distinguish over RU '380 with respect to the relationships among the first, second and third angularly adjacent flow regulators. Applicant believes that RU '380 does not disclose or suggest these relationships and that the deficiency in RU '380 is not supplied by any of the other prior art of record. Applicant therefore submits that claims 11 and 14 are patentable, and it follows that the dependent claims also are patentable.

Respectfully submitted,



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